

Testimony Concerning SB 253
Cheryl Hutchings
Friends of Mansfield Animal Shelter Inc, Founder and President

I would like to thank the Environmental Committee for the opportunity to express my support of SB253, An Act Concerning Revisions to the Animal Importation Statutes

I have been involved with dog rescue since the early 90's first starting out as a member of a local Dalmatian rescue and soon branching out to operate that same rescue for a number of years. As my interest in dogs progressed and I moved out to a rural location in CT I had decided to offer my volunteer services at a local animal shelter. It wasn't long after that myself and some of the other volunteers formed our formal support group FOMAS INC. It has since blossomed over the years into a full fledged foster/rescue group that still mainly supports our local shelter with finances to help the Mansfield Animals get the extended care they need above and beyond what the town budget doesn't financially cover.

Sadly finances affect everyone in some way, shape or form and rescues are no different. There are not a lot of veterinary practices that are willing to help out with discounts to rescues. We are fortunate enough to have two that are willing to work with us but it's still not cheap. With the burden of the extra vet visits this has certainly put a damper in our efforts of being able to fund our rescue. We pay to rescue the animals prior to them even getting to this state. The average cost to our rescue for pulling an animal out of shelter can run anywhere from \$150 to over \$300 for a healthy animal. Then you add to it the first vet visit once they arrive here which pretty much averages \$50.00 for each animal. Then you once again add to it another vet visit ie Health Certificate prior to adoption or at the 90 mark which is again another \$50.00 and so on if the dog is in your care for a longer period of time. So considering your are adding almost \$150.00 of non-care type costs to the already higher than people want to pay for a rescue fees...(yes some people do complain about a \$250.00 adoption fee for a fully vetted animal) now we are up to at the very least a \$300.00 adoption fee in order to just cover expenses of a healthy rescue dog. We indeed had to raise our adoption fee from \$225.00 which was one of the most reasonable fees in this area to \$300.00 just to help cover our expenses. Our organization does lots of events and fundraising throughout the year just to make up the differences of our finances when we get an animal that needs some extra care.

Last year we rescued a dog that had been hit by a car and left at the owners vet office to be euthanized. This was a lovely 6 month old hound mix that did nothing wrong except left unattended by this owners to end up being hit. Our rescue stepped up to save this little guy and had him transported to our care following all the laws that were in place at that time. This little guy cost us lots of finances with caring for his broken leg and lots of vet visits and surgery for a cracked hip. He was in our care for well over 7 months and if we had to add to that the "new" law vet visits our costs would have been even more astronomical.

I believe this law was created for good reason but I believe its targeting the already law abiding rescues and hurting them more than helping weed out the non-conforming rescues. The target should have been those rescues that operate from out of state and just use CT as a dropping

point for their animals. The rescues that are not domiciled here operate as they always did and the new rescues cropping up here are unaware of the law entirely and are still bringing up dogs in to the state under the radar.

Thank you for listening,

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